

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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S E C R E T USNATO 3033

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MCAP, NATO

SUBJECT: CY 1973 U. S. NAVY COMMITMENT TO NATO

REF: STATE 121281

1. I HAD A PRELIMINARY TALK WITH SYG LUNS JUNE 22 ABOUT SCENARIO FOR CONSULTATIONS ON PROPOSED REDUCTION OF 1973 U. S. NAVAL COMMITMENT TO NATO, AND WILL SUBMIT SCENARIO SHORTLY.

2. IN THE MEANTIME, THERE ARE TWO POINTS REGARDING THE SPECIFICS OF U. S. PLANS THAT I BELIEVE WARRANT REVIEW:

A. THE PROPOSED REDUCTION OF THREE DESTROYER ESCORTS IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE TO SACEUR IS POTENTIALLY THE MOST DIFFICULT ASPECT OF OUR REDUCTION PLANS. THIS MOVE WOULD GO DIRECTLY COUNTER TO U. S. ASSURANCES, REPEATED MOST RECENTLY AT THE JUNE DPC AND NAC MINISTERIAL MEETINGS, THAT, GIVEN A SIMILAR EFFORT BY OUR ALLIES, THE U. S. WILL MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE ITS FORCES IN EUROPE.

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THIS PROPOSED REDUCTION OF U. S. FORCES COULD MAKE MORE DIFFICULT OUR EFFORTS TO ATTAIN GREATER ALLIED FORCE IMPROVEMENTS AND BURDEN- SHARING. I SUGGEST THAT THE NAVAL REDUCTION PLAN BE REVIEWED TO SEE IF SACEUR- COMMITTED SHIPS CAN BE EXEMPTED

FROM REDUCTIONS.

B. LUNS FEELS IT WOULD BE PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT POLITICALLY IF THE U. S. SCRAPPED THE REDUCED SHIPS, AND SUGGESTED IF AT ALL POSSIBLE THAT WE BE IN A POSITION TO INDICATE THAT WE WILL MOTHBALL THEM OR OFFER TO SELL OR GIVE THEM TO NATO ALLIES, OR AT MINIMUM, THAT DECISION HAS YET BEEN MADE. I DO NOT KNOW THE PLANS FOR FINAL DISPOSITION OF THE REDUCED SHIPS, BUT AN OFFER TO GIVE OR SELL THEM TO ALLIES, WHETHER THIS OFFER WERE ACTUALLY TAKEN UP OR NOT, WOULD AID OUR EFFORTS HERE.

3. THE ADMINISTRATION'S CHIEF ARGUMENT AGAINST SENATOR MANSFIELD AND OTHERS WHO ARE PRESSING FOR UNILATERAL REDUCTIONS OF U. S. FORCES IN EUROPE IS THAT SUCH CUTS WOULD UNDERMINE EFFORTS FOR MUTUAL REDUCTIONS, NEGOTIATED IN MBFR. THE PROPOSED U. S. REDUCTION OF NAVAL COMMITMENTS IN EUROPE COULD LOOK TO CONGRESS LIKE A UNILATERAL CUT BY THE ADMINISTRATION. TO RESPOND TO CONGRESSIONAL QUESTIONS WASHINGTON AND I WILL NEED A RATIONALE AS TO WHY THE CONGRESS SHOULD NOT VOTE SIMILAR UNILATERAL REDUCTIONS OF ITS OWN. A SUGGESTED RETIONALE FOR USE WITH CONGRESSIONAL CRITICS OF OUR POLICY ON FORCE LEVELS IN EUROPE WOULD BE APPRECIATED.
RUMSFELD

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